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Sen. Gilbert's legislation will require Michigan workers be given preference on construction jobs

LANSING – Sen. Jud Gilbert is introducing legislation that would require companies receiving tax abatements for building or expanding in Michigan to give preference to Michigan construction firms.

“It was brought to my attention that a local company is using out-of-state workers to build its facility at a time when Michigan workers are standing in the unemployment line,” said Gilbert, R-Algonac. “The Legislature gave MEDC the latitude to provide abatements to companies that would create jobs in Michigan but apparently they are not committed to doing so. Instead, MEDC and local officials decided to use Michigan tax dollars to outsource these jobs to another state. This legislation will correct this flaw in our job creation process.”

Sen. Gilbert also pointed out that while MEDC decided it was important enough to require the firm to make its best effort to purchase primarily Michigan-origin grain for the plant the same consideration should have been given to the construction jobs.

The Gilbert legislation makes it explicit that the Michigan Economic Development Corporation must take the following into consideration when designating renaissance zones for tax abatements:

- The creation of indirect jobs associated with construction or expansion of a facility; and
- The number of Michigan residents to be employed to construct or expand a facility.

“What we’re saying is that all other things being equal, preference would be given to a business that commits to use local Michigan firms for its construction work,” Gilbert said. “While it would have seemed like common sense for the MEDC to take this into consideration already, it appears they have not been doing this so we are making it perfectly clear with this legislation that local and state workers need to be given first preference.”

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